

# **MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE BUTTONWOODS FIRE DISTRICT**

**June 17, 2014**

**Buttonwoods Casino**

**The 89th Annual Meeting of the Buttonwoods Fire District was called to order at 7:05 p.m. Moderator, Mr. Mark McKenney presided.**

**Mr. Mark McKenney welcomed new members and property owners of the community: Peter Norquaoy, Lisa Foley, Francesca & Ed Trainer, Ann O'Rourke, and Morgan & Susan Snyder.**

**Mark then reminded the group of the ground rules of the Annual Meeting, and that we hold the meeting primarily to establish the budget, but that the discussion of other issues is welcome.**

**Reading of the Minutes of the 2013 Annual Meeting:**

**Mr. Mark McKenney called for a motion to accept the minutes of the previous meeting (2013) that had been available to all taxpayers of the Fire District in advance, and that the reading of the minutes be waived. The reading of the minutes was waived.**

**Motion to accept minutes passed.**

**Reports of Buttonwood Fire District Officers**

**Mr. Mark McKenney called for the reports of the Officers and Supervisors.**

**Treasurer's Report:**

**Dave Curry reported that the opening balance was \$157,121. A total of \$109,323 was collected and \$157,062 was disbursed, leaving an ending balance is \$109,382. The Casino Reserve began at \$22,927. \$6,000 was added and \$16,635 was spent on outside painting leaving an ending reserve of \$12,302. The Landscaping Reserve is at \$4,844. The Roads Reserve began at \$26,000. \$6,500 was added and \$32,500 was spent on the paving of Buttonwoods Avenue, leaving \$0 as an ending reserve. The Seawall Reserve is at \$60,500. The total unallocated reserve as of May 31, 2014 is \$31,736. Motion passed to accept report as is.**

**Tax Assessor's Report:**

**Mrs. Kathy Baer read the reports for Ms. Feline Frank. It was noted the Tax Rate determined by the Board of Tax Assessors for 2013/2014 was \$1.41 per \$1,000.00 of real estate. The gross valuation of the taxable real estate within the Fire District as of December 31, 2012 was \$76.3 million after adjusting for Senior and G. I. exemptions.**

**Tax Collector's Report:**

**The net calculated revenue from taxes was \$107,620. \$2,286 was uncollected as of June 17, 2014.**

**The Chapel, the Buttonwoods Fire District (BFD), and the Buttonwoods Beach Association (BBA) are exempt from taxation by the BFD. The BFD and the BBA are subject to Warwick City taxes whereas the Chapel is not. With no questions the report was accepted as submitted.**

**Auditor's Report:**

**Mrs. Karen O'Sullivan reported that she had reviewed the Treasurer's Report and validated check disbursements and transaction activity. She reviewed the Tax Assessor and Tax Collector Records and confirmed that the assessments were accurate and that payments were properly collected and recorded. Lastly, she reviewed the Casino Committee Treasurer Records, which revealed that the Cocktail Classic produced net revenue of \$994, the Steak Fry \$290, and the Fourth of July \$213. Children's Crafts and Bowling produced net deficits of \$605 and \$63 respectively. Karen was comfortable that there are policies in place that accurately show the financial condition of the Casino Committee. After no questions there was a motion to adopt the report. The motion was accepted.**

**Supervisors' Report:**

**Kathy Baer presented her report and highlighted the following:**

**During the 2013 / 2014 fiscal year the following was accomplished:**

- A 3 year fire and liability contract was secured.
- The playground was re-mulched.
- Tree maintenance was completed - including removal of branches encroaching the tennis and basketball courts and removal of limbs at Hawthorne and Andrew Comstock.
- The speed bumps were painted
- 137 feet of storm drain pipe was replaced to fix breakages and a blockage at the drain on Claflin Road
- The \"Children at Play\" sign was replaced
- Casino improvements completed:
  - o Porch and railings were repaired
  - o The porch and steps were drum sanded
  - o The exterior was power washed
  - o The shingles were seal coated and power washed
  - o The window frames, trim, ceiling, railings, porch and ramps were painted
  - o Twelve windows were re-glazed and all windows were professionally cleaned
- A traffic engineering firm conducted an assessment of the resurfacing options for Buttonwoods Avenue and recommendations for guiderail protection along the two ends of Promenade Ave.
- Bids were obtained from three paving companies and Beausoleil Contracting was retained to resurface Buttonwoods Avenue from the pillars to Cooper Avenue. In addition, three speed bumps were rebuilt.
- The guiderails at Cooper and Hemlock were repaired. Reflectors

were installed. Guiderails were also repaired or replaced at the ends of Eighth, Tenth, Beach Park, and Eleventh Avenues

- The BFD worked with the Warwick Water Authority to mitigate discolored water in residences primarily between Cooper and 9th Avenues.
- A moth treatment was applied to trees throughout the neighborhood.
- The deteriorated drain pipe near the boat ramp on Promenade Avenue was repaired and restored by inserting a PVC 1" sleeve within the existing pipe.
- The barbeque pit near the Casino was rebuilt with fire bricks and new grates will be installed.

Kathy thanked her fellow volunteers - JD Plummer, Jon Platt, and Dave Curry and also thanked the neighbors for bringing issues to the attention of the Supervisors.

Susan Phipps asked for the list of key holders to be posted outside the Casino

Norma Jean Bassett asked about the tree treatment noting that bugs are eating particularly the mulberry trees. Kathy assured her that the tree professionals are consistent with prior years.

Mark McKenney expressed his opinion that Buttonwoods is in the best shape as it has been in the last 55 years.

**The report was accepted as submitted.**

**Jon Pratt thanked Kathy for her years of service.**

## **Reports of BFD Committees**

### **Casino Committee:**

**Kathy Falaguerra reported that Mr. Conti will be back as Steward and Opening Day will be June 23rd.**

**2014 activities include the Cocktail Classic, the traditional 4th of July parade and field games, Sunsets on the Sea Wall, Bowling and Beers, the Steak Fry, a theatre night out event, and a Summer Concert. Two exercise groups have continued to meet on the Casino grounds and a new group of Pickle Ball players has begun playing on the tennis courts. Children's activities will include bowling, tennis, and arts and crafts.**

**The Casino has been booked for many summer parties - the contact is Jeanne Pass. Casino rental fees were used last year to purchase 100 more chairs and 4 round tables with storage units. This year the committee is researching the purchase of a sound system and improvements to the ventilation and cooling of the Casino.**

**New members of the Casino Committee are welcome and volunteers**

**are always needed for events.**

**The report of the Casino Committee was accepted.**

**Tennis Committee:**

**Ken Steinkamp reported that the courts are open and active with an organized group on Saturday morning and round robin play on Sunday mornings. The schedule is posted. Additional players are always welcome.**

**The tough winter weather produced more issues than usual over the past year. The hard courts continue to need attention, though in the past year enough money was raised for repairs and they have held up pretty well. Interest in Pickleball led to one hard court being marked for that purpose. The Committee is looking into netting to cover the fencing, which will enhance the look and mitigate the exposed utilities.**

**Mark McKenney noted that maintenance costs are expensive and thanked Ken for his efforts to raise the funds necessary to keep the courts in relatively good shape.**

**Point Protection Committee:**

**Carl Baer reported that the ad hoc committee had not met and had no**

report.

## **Reports of Other Community Committees (non BFD)**

### **Buttonwood Beach Association – Susan Martins Phipps:**

**Susan read the letter from the BBA Board that was is delivered to all residents annually. Copies of the letter were available to all at the meeting. She reminded the group that the BBA is a corporation created by the founders of Buttonwoods in 1872. The purpose was to sell land, develop streets, and to maintain and preserve the community held land for the enjoyment of all residents. The BBA also owns all the streets as well as the undeveloped land throughout Buttonwoods.**

**In lights of this responsibility the BBA has made known to the community its intent to see that such land is protected. In order to do so, the Association has been advised that it must preserve its rights as the owners of the property. Failing to do so could result in the loss of BBA land, now often used by many people, to individuals. Failure to act could jeopardize the private nature of Buttonwoods.**

**While anyone can understand a property owner taking steps to protect rights to their land, the BBA faces a more sensitive task. First, many people don't understand the BBA or its role. Second, Association property has often been used by abutting land owners without any thought for the BBA's rights. Without a survey many**

don't know what land they own. Often, the lands is used and frequently landscaped and improved. There is no ill intent; however, it is not that person's land. Third, generally the adjoining landowners are not only neighbors but also friends. No one wants to confront a friend on such issues, even when it's the right thing to do.

The letter reminds residents that property owners are required to contact the Association and request permission to make improvements or otherwise alter BBA land. Specifically, the policy is that, whenever an abutting land owner wishes to use BBA land, the Association must be contacted for permission. These instances include construction or removal of structures or barriers, re-grading and water dispersion, landscape improvements, lawn maintenance, tree removal, or other usage. In these instances, the abutting landowner must acknowledge that:

- The use of the property does not constitute a change in ownership; the BBA continues to own the property
- The BBA retains its right to use the property in the future
- The abutting landowner may be required to remove any improvement and/or restore the property to its original condition
- The abutting land-owner may have to comply with municipal requirements such as requirements for sewer installation
- The abutting landowner will hold the BBA harmless from any liability, damages and legal fees related thereto, arising from any conditions involving the subject the property

- The abutting landowner will maintain insurance coverage on the property, naming the BBA as an additional insured.

The Association is taking the same steps as would any other land owner. It is perhaps even more important that the BBA do so, as it seeks to protect the private nature of the area, and to ensure the property that could be used by so many does not become the property of any one individual.

Susan then noted that copies of a second letter were available. Susan sends this letter to prospective and new homeowners of the neighborhood. Its purpose is to provide background information on Buttonwoods, the BBA, the BFD, the Annual Meeting, the Supervisors, and the BBA land ownership implications for homeowners. The letter urges that surveys be done prior to representation of plot lines. Along with her letter she sends the recipients a copy of the BBA Annual Letter referenced above as well as the Rules and Regulations for the BRD and BBA.

With no questions the report was accepted as presented.

### **Buttonwood Chapel Committee**

Kathy Baer read Claire Flaherty's report and noted that already this year, the Chapel hosted the annual Egg Hunt and a wedding in May. Two additional weddings are planned for the coming year.

**She thanked the community for supporting the chapel and noted that the ornament and bake sale will be repeated on the fourth of July.**

**Historic preservation efforts have focused on restoring the stained glass window over the altar of the Chapel, as well as the arched panel of the front palladian stained glass window. The palladian window project has been significant, with the massive structure having been removed and restored off site. The funds were available to cover the costs but used a major part of the Chapel reserves, which traditionally have been used for painting and carpentry. As such, a special request for support of this restoration effort will be undertaken. She reminded the community that the primary purpose of the Chapel is to serve as an interfaith place of worship. This precludes it from receiving funds from the Fire District for its upkeep. The annual appeal helps generate the funds required to meet the Chapel's annual operating needs and to set aside reserves to ensure that the future physical needs of the building can be met. With the substantial cost of the window project, the upcoming appeal will help the Chapel funds recover from this year's significant expense.**

**Nancy Dickerman commented on the extent of the work done, noting that the new framework includes stainless steel, which is invisible within the wood, but will keep it from flexing in the future.**

**Nancy also thanked Doug Rademacher for removing all the**

**bittersweet that was strangling the trees in the paths and woods.**

**Reading of Communications: - There were no communications in 2013 / 2014.**

**Unfinished Business: None**

**New Business:**

### **Budget Presentation and Acceptance Resolution 2014 - 2015**

**Mr. Jonathon Pratt presented the 2014 budget, noting that there were minimal changes. He commented on the \$10,000 budgeted for the Roads Reserve following the Buttonwoods Avenue repair. \$60,000 was originally allocated for the repair but the final spending was \$51,000. The \$10,000 2014 allocation is to plan for future repairs of additional roads. He noted that the \$6,500 Snow Plowing allocation is contractual and includes sanding. The BFD Sewer Assessment budget was reduced to \$500 as this represents the end of the assessment.**

**The total budget of \$110,000 is 1.8% higher than the \$108,010 budget of the prior year.**

**Doug Rademacher asked about the plans for tree expenditures noting that no money was spent in 2013 / 2014. Jon responded that the plan is to use the tree reserves to continue work on the canopy. He also**

**noted that caterpillar treatments will be funded.**

**The total budget of \$110,000 was voted on, and accepted.**

**Budget Acceptance and Resolution:**

**Three resolutions were read by Mr. J. D. Plummer - Budget Appropriation Resolution for \$110,000, Tax Resolution to raise between \$109,500 and 110,500, and the Tax Anticipation Borrowing Resolution - not to exceed \$20,000 (authorization for Treasurer to borrow funds).**

**All three resolutions were approved.**

**Report of the Nominating Committee – Joe Jolls:**

**The following names are hereby placed in nomination for the offices and terms stated:**

**For Supervisor, for a three year term, from this date to the BFD annual meeting in June, 2017 – Mr. Steven Marcks.**

**For one year terms, from this date to the BFD annual meeting in 2015:**

**For Moderator – Mr. Mark McKenney**

**For Clerk – Mrs. Patricia Wegrzyn McGreen**

**For Treasurer – Mr. David Curry**

**For Tax Assessors – Ms. Feline Frink, Mr. Paul McKenney, Mr. Dave Trembley**

**For Tax Collector – Ms. Feline Frink**

**For Auditor – Mr. Don Youngren**

**Motion to accept the proposed slate was made and accepted.**

**Mrs. Kathy Baer will chair the Nominating Committee for 2015.**

**Election of Officers and Supervisors: Mark McKenney**

**A motion to elect the slate, as presented, was made and seconded.**

**The motion passed and the Clerk cast a single ballot for the slate.**

**Board of Supervisors for the coming year:**

**Mr. Jonathon Pratt – Sr. Supervisor**

**Mr. JD Plummer - Supervisor**

**Mr. Steven Marcks – New Supervisor**

**Ratification of Acts of Officers and Supervisors:**

**The ratification of the acts of the officers was passed.**

**Miscellaneous New Business:**

**None**

**Call for Adjournment**

**Motion to adjourn accepted. The meeting adjourned at 8:05pm.**

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Patricia Wegrzyn McGreen**